

## Glossary of Terms

### Holocaust and Human Behavior High School Elective Course

1. **aliens:** a term, now commonly considered derogatory or dehumanizing, that has been used to refer to foreign-born persons or immigrants who are not citizens
2. **allegiance:** the loyalty of a citizen to their government and/or leaders
3. **allies:** the nations fighting against the Germans during World War II, including the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain
4. **Anschluss:** union; used especially in reference to the forcible uniting of Germany and Austria in 1938
5. **antisemitism:** anti-Jewish prejudice, discrimination, hatred, hostility, violence, or oppression
6. **anti-Judaism:** the opposition to or complete rejection of Judaism as a religion and the total or partial opposition to Jews as worshipers of Judaism. It is a rejection of a particular way of thinking about God and is distinct from antisemitism, which is more similar to a form of racism toward Jews.
7. **armistice:** an agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time; a truce
8. **Article 48:** a section of the Weimar Republic's constitution that allowed the president to pass laws without the approval of the Reichstag (parliament) in times of crisis
9. **Aryans:** a made-up race of Nordic people that the Nazis said invaded India many centuries ago; the Nazis believed the Aryans were their direct ancestors and that Aryans are superior to people of other races
10. **assumption:** a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof
11. **atrocities:** extremely cruel, violent, or shocking acts and/or crimes

- 12. audience:** the person or people who receive a message
- 13. Auschwitz:** a town in what is now southwest Poland; site of the biggest Nazi concentration and extermination death camp during the Holocaust and World War II
- 14. authority:** the person or group of people in charge of a group; the leader
- 15. belonging:** being accepted; the feeling that you are part of a larger community
- 16. blind obedience:** obeying orders without thinking about the consequences of these actions for yourself or others
- 17. brainwash:** a method for systematically changing attitudes or altering beliefs, especially through the use of coercive methods
- 18. bully:** a person or group that tries to intimidate and overpower someone else
- 19. bureaucracy:** the rules, structures, and regulations that control individuals' work within an organization, typically a large organization like a government office
- 20. bureaucrat:** a person working for an organization whose job requires following orders and procedures
- 21. bystander:** a person or a group of people who, through their inaction in the face of unacceptable behavior, can contribute to its perpetuation
- 22. chancellor:** leader of the Reichstag, which was the Weimar Republic's parliament
- 23. choosing to participate:** deciding to act in ways that benefit a larger community
- 24. citizen:** a person who is given special legal rights as a member of a nation
- 25. civil service:** branches of public service that are not legislative, judicial, or military and in which employment is usually based on competitive examination. Civil service employees work under the state, local, and federal government in order to provide a service to the nation's citizens; examples include postal workers, air-traffic controllers, police officers, and other more specialized careers.
- 26. civic education:** all the processes that go into the preparation of citizens, which affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities
- 27. coerce:** to compel another using force, intimidation, fear, or violence

- 28. commemorate:** to recall and show respect for something or someone
- 29. community:** a social group whose members have something in common, such as a shared government, geographic location, culture, or heritage. Community can also refer to the physical location where such a group lives.
- 30. comrade:** an intimate friend or associate; a fellow soldier
- 31. comradeship:** the state of being companions, associates, or friends, especially ones who share activities, an occupation, etc.
- 32. concentration camp:** a term that refers to a camp in which people are detained or confined (including political opponents and those deemed racially inferior), usually under harsh conditions and without regard for legal norms of arrest and imprisonment that are acceptable in a constitutional democracy. In 1933, the Nazis opened their first concentration camp, Dachau. The major purpose of the earliest concentration camps during the 1930s was to imprison and intimidate the leaders of political, social, and cultural movements that the Nazis perceived to be a threat to the survival of the regime. Later, during World War II, the Nazis forced millions of Jews and other victims, including people with disabilities, Gypsies, and homosexuals, into concentration camps, where most of them were killed, either by being murdered or as a result of inhumane living conditions.<sup>1</sup>
- 33. conformity:** when people act in the same ways and/or believe the same ideas as other people in their group in order to feel a sense of belonging
- 34. consequences:** the results or impact of a person or group's actions or behaviors
- 35. conspiracy:** a secret plan by a group to do something unlawful or harmful
- 36. constitution:** the basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it
- 37. contract:** a binding agreement between two or more persons or parties
- 38. coup:** a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government; the overthrow of an existing government

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<sup>1</sup> "[Concentration Camps, 1933-39](#)," Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 39. crematorium:** a facility containing a furnace for reducing dead bodies to ashes by burning
- 40. crimes against humanity:** planned and organized murder or other inhumane acts committed against a group of people, often causing human suffering or death on a large scale
- 41. democracy:** a form of government in which people have a voice in how they are governed, such as by voting in elections
- 42. denial:** a refusal; often means a refusal to believe or accept something as the truth
- 43. deportation:** when a person or a group of people are removed, by force, from the place where they live
- 44. depression:** a time when many workers are unemployed. Companies make less money and some may close. As a result, workers lose their jobs.
- 45. dictator:** a person who has complete control over how a nation is governed and makes all the rules and decisions without input from anyone else
- 46. dictatorship:** a form of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a single leader (dictator) or small group
- 47. dignity:** the right of a person to be valued and respected for their own sake, and to be treated humanely
- 48. dilemma:** a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, especially equally undesirable ones
- 49. diplomat:** an official representing a country or nation abroad
- 50. discrimination:** treating people differently, usually unfairly, because they belong to a particular group
- 51. disillusion:** to no longer hold illusions; disenchantment; dissatisfaction or defeat of expectation or hope
- 52. dissent:** disagreement with a person or a group of people
- 53. educate:** to provide schooling or training, especially in a skill, trade, or profession; to send to school

- 54. Einsatzgruppen:** This German word is translated into English literally as “special action groups.” Einsatzgruppen are also often referred to in English as “mobile killing units.” They were special units of the German Security Police (Sicherheitspolizei, SiPo) and the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst, SD), created as early as 1938. Einsatzgruppen were assigned for duty in territories newly seized by the German armed forces. Their task was to carry out various security measures, such as identifying and neutralizing potential enemies of German rule, seizing important sites and preventing sabotage, and recruiting collaborators and establishing intelligence networks. They are best known for their role in the murder of more than a million Jewish victims during the German-Soviet war (beginning in June 1941), usually in mass shootings.
- 55. emigration:** moving from one’s native country in order to settle in another
- 56. euphemism:** an apparently inoffensive word or phrase substituted for one that would be considered offensive or hurtful. It is a “nice way” of saying something unpleasant. Nazi officials often used euphemisms when speaking about acts of violence and terror and their goal to murder all Jews. For example, the phrase “special treatment” (*Sonderbehandlung* in German) was used to refer to killings.<sup>2</sup>
- 57. exclusion:** when someone is not allowed membership in a group
- 58. expectations/norms/rules:** guidelines that a group develops together and agrees to follow
- 59. expel:** force out
- 60. extermination:** to kill on a large scale
- 61. Facing History and Ourselves:** a nonprofit organization whose mission is to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate
- 62. fear:** being scared of a person, place, thing, or idea
- 63. Final Solution:** The Nazi “Final Solution to the Jewish Question” (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) was the deliberate, planned mass murder of European Jews. It occurred between 1941 and 1945. It was, and is, often referred to as the “Final Solution” (*Endlösung*). The Final Solution was the tragic culmination of the Nazi persecution of Europe’s Jews. As such, it is a key component of the Holocaust (1933–1945).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<sup>3</sup> [“The ‘Final Solution,’”](#) Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 64. forgiveness:** a conscious, deliberate decision by a victim to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward the person or group who perpetrated the harm; to pardon
- 65. fragility:** being delicate or fragile; easily broken
- 66. Führer:** German word for “leader” that is strongly associated with the Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, a ruthless, tyrannical leader who demanded that the title *der Führer* (“the Leader”) be used to define his absolute authority
- 67. genocide:** violent crimes or acts committed with the intent to destroy an ethnic, racial, national, or religious group
- 68. Gestapo** (*Geheime Staatspolizei*): the German Secret State Police, which was under SS Nazi control. It was responsible for investigating political crimes and opposition activities and was a reliably brutal tool that enforced Nazism’s most radical impulses.<sup>4</sup>
- 69. ghetto:** a specific area of a city or town in which Jews were forced to live (and often not permitted to leave). Ghettos were overcrowded and deprived of sufficient food and other basic supplies.
- 70. head and heart:** participating in an activity with both your mind (head) and your feelings (heart)
- 71. Heinrich Himmler:** one of the most powerful Nazi politicians. He was head of the Gestapo and also oversaw the Final Solution (the planned mass murder of Jews and others deemed unfit).
- 72. President Paul von Hindenburg:** president of the Weimar Republic (Germany) from 1925 to 1934. He appointed Hitler to the position of chancellor of the Reichstag (parliament).
- 73. historical context:** the particular events, trends, and ideas that characterize a particular time and place
- 74. Adolf Hitler:** the Nazi dictator of Germany from 1933 to 1945

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<sup>4</sup> [“The Gestapo: Overview,”](#) Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 75. Holocaust:** a period of four years (1941–1944) during which the Nazis organized and carried out the murder of 6 million Jews, as well as millions of others, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Gypsies, homosexuals, and people with disabilities
- 76. Holocaust denial:** any attempt to negate the established facts of the Nazi genocide of European Jews. Holocaust denial and distortion are forms of antisemitism, prejudice against or hatred of Jews.<sup>5</sup>
- 77. identity:** how a person answers the question, “Who am I?” often including their interests, beliefs, religion, family, ethnic background, etc. Identity is shaped by the individual and it is also influenced by society.
- 78. ideology:** a framework of beliefs and ideals about the way the world works
- 79. inclusion:** when someone is allowed to join a particular group or community
- 80. indoctrinate:** to teach (a person or people) to fully accept the ideas, opinions, and beliefs of a particular group uncritically. Indoctrination does not allow for the consideration of other/alternative ideas, opinions, beliefs, or perspectives.
- 81. infidel:** a term that is sometimes used to describe a person who does not adhere to the same religious beliefs as one’s own
- 82. inflation:** when money loses its value. During inflation, you need more money to buy the same item (e.g., \$3 to buy milk that used to cost \$2).
- 83. intermarriage:** marriage between people of two different backgrounds; marrying someone from a different religion, such as a Jew marrying a Protestant
- 84. international community:** the shared interests of all of the nations of the world
- 85. intervene:** to come between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events
- 86. isolation:** the complete separation from others; the condition of being alone
- 87. Jew:** a person who is considered to be a member of the Jewish community because of a shared faith, history, or cultural background
- 88. judgment:** the act of evaluating behavior (in terms of right and wrong), deciding who is responsible for this behavior, and determining rewards or punishments

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<sup>5</sup> [“Holocaust Denial and Distortion,”](#) Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 89. justice:** corrective action that is executed according to the requirements of the law. In theory, it ensures compliance with laws and the fair treatment of all individuals.
- 90. kapos:** concentration camp prisoners selected to oversee other prisoners on labor details. The term *kapo* is often used to describe any concentration camp prisoner to whom the SS gave authority over other prisoners.<sup>6</sup>
- 91. killing center:** a camp designed for the purpose of murdering large numbers of victims, primarily in gas chambers, as quickly and efficiently as possible
- 92. Kristallnacht:** Night of Broken Glass; a night of organized street violence against Jews in Germany and Austria (November 9–10, 1938)
- 93. legacy:** a lasting impact on the world; something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past
- 94. levers of power:** a framework developed by Martha Minow to map out the organizations, institutions, and technologies that can enable us to strengthen the impact of our voices and our actions
- 95. loyalty:** firm dedication and devotion
- 96. mass murder:** the widespread murder of a large number of people
- 97. marginalize:** to treat a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral
- 98. media:** different methods of communication (such as TV, Internet, magazines, newspapers, etc.) that reach a wide audience
- 99. media literacy:** the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms
- 100. *Mein Kampf*:** autobiographical manifesto written by Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler in 1925. The title *Mein Kampf* is a German phrase meaning “My Struggle” or “My Battle.” The book describes the process by which Hitler became antisemitic and outlines his political ideology and future plans for Germany.
- 101. membership:** belonging to a group
- 102. memorials:** places to remember and honor special people or events
- 103. message:** an idea that a person or group tries to communicate to others

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<sup>6</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



- 104. messenger:** someone or something that distributes a message
- 105. millet:** semi-autonomous communities organized by religion and administered by leaders of a religious group during the Ottoman Empire
- 106. *Mischlinge*:** a pejorative legal term used in Nazi Germany to denote persons of mixed “Aryan” and non-Aryan, such as Jewish, ancestry, as codified in the Nuremberg racial laws of 1935. In German, the word has the general denotation of “hybrid,” “mongrel,” or “half-breed.”
- 107. missionary:** a member of a religious group who is sent to an area in order to promote its faith or provide services to people
- 108. “national community”:** *Volksgemeinschaft* in German; originally meant that all Germans, regardless of class, religious, and social differences, would work together to achieve a national purpose, but the Nazis used the term to advance the idea of a racially pure and harmonious national community united in its devotion to the German people, their nation, and their leader
- 109. nationalism:** identification with one’s own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other peoples and nations
- 110. Nazi:** a member of the Nazi political party
- 111. Nazi Party** (the National Socialist German Workers’ Party): a political group (party) founded in Germany in 1919. Its main leader was Adolf Hitler. The Nazi Party supported the idea that only people of Aryan descent should be citizens of Germany and that Jews, and others deemed unfit, should be removed from the country.
- 112. norms:** guidelines that a group develops together and agrees to follow
- 113. Nuremberg laws:** a set of laws passed by the Nazis in 1935. The laws classified people as German if all four of their grandparents were of “German blood,” while people were classified as Jews if they had three or four Jewish grandparents. A person with one or two Jewish grandparents was called a *Mischling*, a “crossbreed.” These laws were later used to decide who would be deported to ghettos and concentration camps.
- 114. oath:** a vow or promise
- 115. obedience:** following rules, orders, or commands

- 116. opportunism:** taking advantage of a situation from which you might benefit without considering (or deliberately disregarding) the consequences for others
- 117. ostracism:** excluding a person or group from the larger community
- 118. others:** people we define as different and separate from us
- 119. paramilitary:** an organization whose structure, tactics, and culture are similar to those of a professional military but that is not part of a country's official or armed forces
- 120. participation:** deciding to act in ways that benefit a larger community
- 121. party platform:** a document that lists the core beliefs of a political party
- 122. patriotism:** devotion to and vigorous support for one's country; national loyalty
- 123. peer pressure:** the idea that you need to act in a certain way to maintain a friendship or be accepted in a social group; doing something or believing something just because that is what your friends are doing or believing
- 124. perpetrator:** a person or group who commits crimes or other acts of injustice or violence
- 125. persecution:** being treated unfairly, often because of your beliefs or background
- 126. persuade:** to convince
- 127. pogrom:** Russian word meaning "to wreak havoc, to demolish violently." Historically, the term refers to violent attacks and massacres against helpless people, usually planned, specifically in reference to massacres of Jewish people.<sup>7</sup>
- 128. political party:** a group of people who share the same beliefs about how government should be run
- 129. prejudice:** to prejudge a person because of a group to which that person belongs
- 130. propaganda:** information spread for the purpose of influencing opinions, often for or against a particular idea or group. To persuade an audience, propaganda often uses lies, misleading information, or appeals to emotions rather than reason.

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<sup>7</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 131. punishment:** a penalty for behavior deemed inappropriate, bad or illegal by those in power.
- 132. quota:** a fixed minimum or maximum number of a particular group of people allowed to do something
- 133. race:** a classification of human beings based on the idea that people can be divided into separate genetic groups often based on skin tone. This classification is often used to support a false belief that some groups of people are genetically superior to other groups of people.
- 134. reckoning:** a time or act of being held accountable
- 135. reconciliation:** the process of two people or groups in a conflict agreeing to make amends or come to a truce; the restoration of friendly relations
- 136. reflection:** the process of thinking deeply about an idea or event, often personal in nature (such as by thinking about your opinion or your experience with a topic)
- 137. refugee:** people who have fled war, violence, conflict, or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country
- 138. Reich:** “realm” or “empire” in German; especially used to describe Germany during the period of Nazi control from 1933 to 1945
- 139. Reichsmark:** the German money used during the Weimar and Nazi eras
- 140. Reichstag:** the German word for the building where laws are made, like our Capitol in Washington, DC; also refers to the German legislature between 1871 and 1942 to which members were elected (until 1933), just as Americans elect members to Congress<sup>8</sup>
- 141. religion:** a belief system based around spirituality and/or a divinity
- 142. reparations:** paying back those who suffered from a crime
- 143. republic:** a state in which power is held by the people and their elected representatives
- 144. rescuers:** people who attempt to save victims of violence

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<sup>8</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 145. resettlement:** a Nazi euphemism for deportation and murder, generally involving people having to leave their homes (often under force) and move elsewhere<sup>9</sup>
- 146. resistance:** questioning authority or fighting back against unjust treatment
- 147. resisters:** those who fight back against authority
- 148. responsibility:** one's duty or obligation
- 149. restitution:** making things better after a crime or injury
- 150. Roma:** a European ethnic group whose ancestry can be traced to modern-day India and Pakistan. Many Romani groups refer to themselves by different names, such as Sinti, Kalderashi, or Lalleri. Sinti are Roma with historical roots in German-speaking lands. In many languages, Roma are often referred to by exonyms (names or labels assigned to a group or place by outsiders). In English, this word is "Gypsy," which is generally considered derogatory. During the Nazi period, German authorities and their allies throughout Europe subjected entire Romani communities to systematic racial persecution. Romani communities across the continent were decimated.<sup>10</sup>
- 151. scapegoating:** when a person or group is assigned blame for a larger problem or issue
- 152. SS (Schutzstaffel, or Protection Squads):** originally established as Adolf Hitler's personal bodyguard unit. It would later become both the elite guard of the Nazi Reich and Hitler's executive force, prepared to carry out all security-related duties without regard for legal restraint.<sup>11</sup>
- 153. secular:** of or relating to worldly things or to things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual, or sacred
- 154. self-determination:** the belief that every nation (or group of people) should have its own independent state and not be ruled by others

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<sup>9</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<sup>10</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<sup>11</sup> ["The SS,"](#) Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 155. Shoah:** the Hebrew word for “catastrophe,” used to describe the killing of nearly 6 million Jews in Europe by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War
- 156. shtetl:** a small Jewish town or village in eastern Europe
- 157. spiritual resistance:** the struggle to maintain a sense of identity, dignity, faith, and culture in the degrading and dehumanizing systems of the ghettos and camps
- 158. Star of David:** six-pointed star often used as a symbol of the Jewish religion. The Nazis transformed this religious and cultural symbol into a badge for identifying, segregating, and humiliating Jews.<sup>12</sup>
- 159. stereotype:** a generalization about an entire group of people; a belief that each member of a particular group possesses the same characteristic
- 160. strategy:** a thoughtful plan for approaching an issue or problem
- 161. suffrage:** the right to vote in a political election, especially to vote for representatives in a government
- 162. supremacy:** to be (or deem oneself to be) above or superior to another person or group
- 163. survivors:** people who have lived through an experience of violence or injustice
- 164. synagogue:** a Jewish house of worship and learning
- 165. treaty:** a written agreement between two or more countries that is formally approved and signed by their leaders, usually in reference to peace, alliance, commerce, or other international relations
- 166. Treaty of Versailles:** the peace treaty signed in 1919 that ended World War I and made clear Germany’s defeat. Germany was ordered to pay back the victors (primarily France, Britain, and Russia) with money and land. Many Germans felt that this was unfair and humiliating.
- 167. tribunal:** a court of justice
- 168. trial:** a formal examination of evidence before a judge, and typically before a jury, in order to decide guilt in a case of criminal or civil proceedings

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<sup>12</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

- 169. ultra-nationalism:** extreme form of nationalism
- 170. United Nations (UN):** An international organization made up of 192 countries whose purpose is to help countries work together to solve problems related to human rights, military conflicts, and economic development. The United Nations adopts treaties, resolutions, and conventions, and in doing so establishes international law.
- 171. universe of obligation:** how we define whom we are responsible for helping and protecting
- 172. upstander:** an individual, group, or nation who witnesses injustice and take steps to stop or prevent it
- 173. vengeance:** in response to war and genocide, revenge or retaliation against those who instigated the war and committed atrocities. It is usually carried out by the victims themselves, and it can perpetuate a cycle of violence.
- 174. victims:** people who have been oppressed and/or attacked, verbally and/or physically
- 175. visa:** a conditional authorization granted by a government to a foreigner that allows them to enter, remain within, or leave its territory
- 176. Weimar Republic:** the regime in post-World War I Germany, from 1919 until 1934, when Adolf Hitler took power
- 177. yellow star:** a badge featuring the Star of David (a symbol of Judaism) used by the Nazi regime during the Holocaust as a method of identifying Jews<sup>13</sup>
- 178. Zyklon B:** a highly poisonous insecticide originally used to kill rats and insects. When exposed to air, Zyklon B pellets converted into lethal gas. This proved to be the quickest gassing method and was chosen as the means of mass murder at Auschwitz.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<sup>14</sup> [Glossary](#), Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.